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# Inventing the New Through the Old: The Essence of *Haikai* and the *Zhuangzi*

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## Introduction

The latter half of the seventeenth century witnessed an innovative phenomenon in Japanese *haikai* 俳諧 (comic linked verse) circles. A group of *haikai* poets who called themselves the Danrin 談林 enthusiastically drew upon the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (The works of Master Zhuang), setting off a decade-long trend of using the *Zhuangzi* in *haikai* composition. In assessing the causes and significance of this phenomenon previous studies give much attention to the intellectual, philosophical and religious climates, noting two major factors that inspired the Danrin's interest in the *Zhuangzi*. One is the medieval *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The tale of Genji) scholars' commentaries, which compare the fictional story of Genji with the *gugen* 寓言 (parable)<sup>1</sup> of the *Zhuangzi*. The

other is the Song scholar Lin Xiyi's 林希逸<sup>2</sup> annotations of the *Zhuangzi*, which stress that the entire *Zhuangzi* is a parable. While scholarly opinion differs on which factor or factors played a key role behind the phenomenon, they agree that the Danrin's enthusiasm for the *Zhuangzi* lies primarily in imitating the *gugen* in the work.<sup>3</sup>

meaning, according to Burton Watson, is words put into the mouth of historical or fictional persons to make them more compelling. The *Zhuangzi* scholars have also used the term to refer to the general writing style of the text. Watson has rendered the meaning of the term into "imported words" in his translation of the *Zhuangzi*. The title of Konishi Jin'ichi's 小西甚一 study on Basho and *Zhuangzi*'s *gugen*, "Basho to gugen setsu" 芭蕉と寓言説 [*Nihon gakushiin kiyo* 日本学士院紀要 no. 18 (1960) 2 and 3] is translated into "Basho and Chuang-tsu's Parabolical Phraseology." The term in modern Japanese and Chinese is often translated as "fable," "apologue," or "parable," but these translations are not suitable to the present study. In the context of the Danrin *haikai*, *gugen* is used to imply both the theoretical frame of reference and the technical device for the metaphorical and fictional expression of *haikai*. Since the complex connotations of the term cannot be properly expressed by existing English words, this article uses *gugen* throughout.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gugen* (*yuyan* in Chinese) appears in the twenty-seventh chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. Its original

<sup>2</sup> Lin Xiyi, whose dates of birth and death are unknown, was a scholar and official of Song China. According to *Song Yuan xue an* 宋元學案 (Brief biographies of the Song and Yuan scholars) 47, he became *Jinshi* (a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations) during the Duanping era (1234-37), and was once appointed a Vice Director of the Office of Personnel Evaluation. He was skilled at painting, calligraphy and poetry. Lin's literary name was Juanzhai 倦齋. His explanation of the *Zhuangzi*, (*Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi* 莊子? 齋口義, 1253), was reprinted in Japan during the seventeenth century and widely read by the *haikai* poets.

<sup>3</sup> For in-depth studies on the Danrin *haikai* and the *Zhuangzi*, see Yamamoto Heiichiro 山本平一郎, "Haikai to Soji ga gugen" 俳諧と莊子が寓言 (*Haikai* and *Zhuangzi*'s *gugen*), in *Kokugo to ko-*

Based on earlier investigations of the external factors that promoted the popularity of the *Zhuangzi* among the Danrin poets, this article explores the inner elements in the development of *haikai* that led to the Danrin's encounter with the *Zhuangzi*. Allusion to classical sources has been one of the oldest poetic "games" in the world, but none of other poetic genre has witnessed the important role classical sources played in the theorization and signification of *haikai*. This article reveals that the Danrin poets' interest in the Daoist classic is motivated not only by their impulse to defend comic linked verse, but, more significantly, also by an urgent need to reconstruct and regenerate the signifying systems of the comic poetry, especially its poetic essence (*hon'i* 本意). This latter need comes from the paradoxical nature of *haikai*. On one hand, as a newly rising commoners' art, comic linked verse must distinguish itself from classical linked verse by deconstructing the classical poetic diction, breaking the orthodox conventions, and parodying the aristocratic classics. On the other hand, *haikai* composition relies heavily on the classical past, because the dialogic nature of a *haikai* sequence requires a shared knowledge of instituted poetic signifiers

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*kubungaku*, 14 (1937) 1, pp. 60-87; 2, pp. 167-192; Kon Eizo 今栄蔵 "Danrin haikai oboegaki, Gugenetsu no genryu to bungaku-shiteki jittai" 談林俳諧覚書一寓言説の源流と文学史の実態 (Notes on Danrin *haikai*--The origin of gugen theories and its presence in Japanese literary history), in *Kokugo kokubun kenkyu* 国語国文研究, No 7 (1953), pp. 1-2; and Nonomura Katsuhide 野々村勝英, "Danrin haikai no gugenron wo megutte" 談林俳諧の寓言論をめぐって (On the *gugen* theories in Danrin *haikai*), *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 国語と国文学, 33, no. 11 (1956): 36-44. Konishi Jin'ichi's and Hirota Jiro's 広田二郎 works on the influence of the *Zhuangzi* in Basho's *haikai* also provide insightful discussions on the Danrin school's encounter with the *Zhuangzi*. See "Basho to gugenetsu," pp. 97-118; Hirota Jiro, *Basho no geijutsu--Sono tenkai to haikai* 芭蕉の芸術--その展開と背景 (Basho's art--its development and background. Tokyo: Yuseido, 1968), pp. 192-237.

to sustain the poetic conversation, and the extremely short form of each verse needs conventionalized mediating signs to clarify, translate, and expand the poetic essence through intertextual structures. Therefore *haikai*, while being a parodic, unconventional genre of popular culture, never completely breaks away from the classical tradition.

This contradiction is reflected clearly in the *haikai* poets' struggle to convey profound essence through *haikai* language (*haigon* 俳言), the vernacular and Chinese-origin words that lack the literary and cultural associations accumulated within the classical poetic diction. Attempting to invent a new poetic essence with *haikai* language, the Danrin poets found the *Zhuangzi* an ideal foundation text. Although the Danrin's understanding of the *Zhuangzi* had limitations, their effort inspired the later Shomon 蕉門 school, whose continued search for new poetic possibilities indicated by the Daoist classic brought *haikai*'s encounter with the *Zhuangzi* to meaningful fruition. Because a full discussion of the *haikai* poets' adaptation of the Daoist classic is beyond the scale of this paper, the examination in the following pages focuses on the Danrin's attempts to reinvent the essence of *haikai* with the *Zhuangzi*, and my discussion on the Shomon *haikai* is restricted to a few examples of how the *Zhuangzi* is used as mediating signs or texts to deepen the poetic essence.<sup>4</sup>

### The Essence of the Comic Poetry and the *Zhuangzi*

Around 1674, a conflict occurred between two major *haikai* schools. The Teimon 貞門 school, which tried hard to appropriate *haikai* according to orthodox poetic tradition, accused the Danrin 談林 school of being against the traditional principles. When Nishiyama Soin 西山宗因 (1605-1682), the leader of the Danrin school, published a hundred-verse sequence enti-

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<sup>4</sup> For comprehensive studies of Daoist influence on Basho, see Hirota Jiro, *Basho no geijutsu--Sono tenkai to haikai*, and Konishi Jin'ichi, "Basho to gugenetsu," cited in Note 2 above.

tled (*Nishiyama Soin*) *Kabashira hyakku* (西山宗因) 蚊柱百句 (Swarming Mosquitoes: One hundred verses), the Teimon responded with a criticism called *Shibuuchiwa* 渋団 (Astringent fan), whose metaphorical title means a powerful fan to beat off the mosquitoes of the Danrin. The work criticizes Soin's verses as "having lost the essence (*hon'i*) of poetry while simply spitting out whatever he wanted to say."<sup>5</sup> "Isn't *haikai* after all," the attacker says, "a form of *waka* 和歌? Poetry is a way to assist government and to edify people."<sup>6</sup> Defending their leader's work, Okanishi Ichu 岡西惟中 (1637-1711), a disciple of Soin and a vocal member of the Danrin, wrote *Shibuuchiwa hento* 渋団返答 (A response to "Astringent fan"), in which he made an intriguing statement concerning the origin and essence of *haikai*: "Among the books from China, I think the entire work of the *Zhuangzi* is the essence (*hon'i*) of *haikai*. Its use of words and its expression are all *haikai*. In our country, the essence (*hon'i*) of *The Tale of Genji* is *haikai*."<sup>7</sup> The emphasis on *hon'i*, or the poetic essence, in both the Teimon's and the Danrin's arguments reveals a unique tradition of Japanese poetry: poems must be composed according to the normative essence based on authoritative texts.

*Hon'i*, which literally means "the original meaning," was used widely in *waka*, *renga* and *haikai* theories. As early as the tenth century, the term already appeared in the judgments of poetry contests, referring to the original nature or way of an object treated in poetry. Through the Heian period, the essences of the images and topics em-

ployed in the major imperial *waka* anthologies became conventionalized. As a result, what a word or an image signifies in poetry was no longer the pure choice of an individual poet or the reader, but the normative essence defined by the celebrated poems in the *waka* tradition, especially those in the first eight imperial anthologies. The concept of *hon'i* was further elaborated and systematized by *renga* and *haikai* masters, who applied the term not only to the poetic topics and images, but also to the nature of poetry. As seen in the debate between the Teimon and Danrin, while the Teimon insisted that *haikai* was "a form of *waka*" and it should assist government and moral edification, the Danrin took the *Zhuangzi* as the *hon'i* of *haikai*, associating the Daoist classic with the essence of *haikai* at an ontological level.

It is well known that, in general, the Japanese perspective on poetry differs from that of Chinese in its emphasis on the expressive/lyrical nature instead of the pragmatic/didactic function defined by the Confucian scholars. When discussing the Chinese influence on the *Kokinshu* 古今集 prefaces to the first imperially commissioned anthology, the *Kokin wakashu* 古今和歌集 (905), John Timothy Wixted makes the following observation:

The backdrop to all Chinese consideration of literature, from earliest times until today, has been the primacy of its pragmatic ends. In contrast with this, the *Kokinshu* prefaces, especially the Japanese preface, while paying homage to pragmatic ends, pointed the direction to a more expressively oriented literature. These in turn became the classic earliest source for later Japanese views of poetry. With such a venerable authority as the Japanese preface behind them--its recondite Chinese reference misunderstood or ignored--later Japanese writers and theorists (unlike their Chinese counterparts) were spared having to concern themselves with justifying the expressive/lyrical function of

<sup>5</sup> *Shibuuchiwa* (Astringent fan, 1674). The work is attributed to Kyohoshi, but his identity is not clear. He might be a person from Nara. Some scholars suspect that the author might be Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟. See Iida Masakazu 飯田正一, Esaka Hironao 榎坂浩尚, and Inui Hiroyuki 乾裕幸, eds. *Koten haibungaku taikai* 古典俳文学大系 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1972) 4, p. 41. Henceforth abbreviated KHT.

<sup>6</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, KHT, 4, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, KHT, 4, p. 59.

literature. This has had profound implication for the later course of Japanese literature.<sup>8</sup>

However, Edo period *haikai* poets' view of this critical history provides a different picture. As seen in the excerpt from *Shibuuchiwa* above, Teimon poets believe that "poetry is a way to assist government and to edify people." According to Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624-1705), a major theoretician of the Teimon school and the suspected author of *Shibuuchiwa*, this concept finds its roots in the *Kokinshu* prefaces, which, in turn, draws upon the Six Principles (*liuyi* 六義 in Chinese, *rikugi* in Japanese) in the "Great Preface" to the oldest Chinese poetic anthology, the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經). Kigin summarizes this critical history in his *Haikai umoregi* 俳諧埋木 (The buried tree of *haikai*, 1673) as the following:

Regarding the Six Principles, in Japanese poetry, they were found in the *Kokinshu*. Kyogoku Komon 京極黄門<sup>9</sup> says that the essence of the Six Principles was enunciated by the *Classic of Poetry* and he recommends that people read it. Among *renga* poets, the venerable Shinkei 心敬 (1406-1475) once said that the fundamentals [of the Six Principles] should permeate each verse. Soyo 宗養 also discussed them. *Haikai* is no exception.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius, trans. and annot., *Kokinshu: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 399.

<sup>9</sup> Kyogoku Komon refers to the famous *waka* poet and critic, Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241).

<sup>10</sup> *Haikai umoregi* (The buried tree of *haikai*, compiled in 1655 and published in 1673), in Ogata Tsutomu 尾形侑 ed., *Kigin haironshu* 季吟俳論集 (Collection of Kigin's treatises on *haikai*), in *Koten bunko* 古典文庫 (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1960) Vol. 151, pp. 36-37.

To get a clear idea of the critical tradition which Kigin stresses by referring to the Six Principles, let's take a close look at Kigin's discussion of the first principle, *fu* 風 (the Suasive Poem).<sup>11</sup>

(1) *Fu*. The *Yakumo misho* 八雲御抄<sup>12</sup> says: "*Fu* is the Suasive Poem. It speaks of one thing by drawing upon another. It is to enlighten the listener's mind without spelling it out directly." According to Kyogoku Komon, the term *fu* means to reveal the truth of one thing covertly by drawing upon another. The *fu*-style poem has to be the same. A poem that does not put forth its intent directly but draws upon other things, whatever it speaks of, is called *fu*. According to Fujiwara Kiyosuke 清輔<sup>13</sup> the *Classic of Poetry* says: "Those above edify those below with *feng* 風 [*fu* in Japanese]; those below also criticize those above with *feng*." (Note: Both edification through *feng* and criticism through *feng* mean to use allegorical references, which is to avoid speaking overtly.)<sup>14</sup> I think *fu* in the work means using allegorical reference. It is read "*soe*" [in its Japanese pronunciation]. "*Soe*" means to reveal the meaning while not presenting the topic overtly. Therefore, *fu* is called the Suasive Poem. In his study of the *Kokinshu*, Sogi 宗祇 points out that there are different aspects

<sup>11</sup> I follow Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius in translating *fu* here.

<sup>12</sup> *Yakumo misho* (Treatises on poetry by Retired Emperor Juntoku 順徳) is a six-volume work of *waka* poetics. The manuscript of the work was completed in 1234.

<sup>13</sup> Fujiwara Kiyosuke (1104-1177) was a late Heian poet and critic. His work referred to here is probably his *Ôgisho* 奥義抄 (Notes on the poetic profundities, 1124-1151). It is a representative work of *waka* poetics of the Heian period.

<sup>14</sup> This note was by the original author.

stressed by the Six Principles in the *Classic of Poetry*, which can be divided into the basic principles and the supporting methods, or the normative forms and the rhetorical modes, respectively. Also, some poems that belong to the category of *fu* use *ko* 興 (evocative songs)<sup>15</sup> at the same time. Some scholars say that the way *feng* is used [in China] is slightly different from that in this country, but the meaning is the same.<sup>16</sup>

The original Chinese term, *feng*, in the *Classic of Poetry* comes from a section title, “*Guofeng*” 國風, the “Airs of the States.” In later critical writings it is often used to describe poems that are like the *Guofeng*. The term sometimes is also interpreted as *feng* 風, which means to criticize. The translation of the term in the *Kokinshu* prefaces, *soeuta*, the Suasive Poem, seems to have followed the latter interpretation, designating the pragmatic function of poem. Kigin’s writings indicate that Japanese theorists were not “spared having to concern themselves with justifying the expressive/lyrical function of literature.” Instead, from representative works of *waka* poetics to treatises on *renga* and *haikai*, most important critical writings concerning the fundamentals of poetry include a discussion of the Six Principles to justify their own poems. Compared with the *Kokinshu* prefaces, these later Japanese theorists seem to have interpreted the six principles in a more didactic way.

Whether or not the Six Principles have truly permeated Japanese poetry is a debatable issue. As Wixted points out, Japanese poetry and Chinese poetry show different orientations from their emergence, and the way in which the *Kokinshu* prefaces cite the Six Principles is not much more than paying homage to the Chinese classic. However, what is of interest is just how strongly the Japanese writers felt the need to pay homage to the past, to seek the essence of poetry in the

classical texts. As seen in the following excerpts, the Teimon and the Danrin in fact draw upon the same classical sources to define the essence of *haikai*. In *Haikai umoregi*, Kigin writes:

Speaking of *haikai*, the *Ôgisho* says that “*haikai*” mentioned in the *Hanshu* 漢書 refers to “*huaji*” 滑稽. “*Hua*” 滑 means “wonderful meaning.” “*Ji*” 稽 means “endless words.” “The Origin of *Huaji*” in *Shiji* 史記 says: “*Huaji* was a type of vessel for wine. Later the word was used to describe effortless creativity and endless expression, like a *hauji* from which wine is poured out. . . . The two characters for *haikai* can be read as *wazagoto*. Therefore, people think that it is a kind of frivolous joke. But this is not necessarily true. As I mentioned earlier, although those who devoted themselves to *huaji* were not directly dealing with the Way (*Dao* 道, *do* in Japanese), they actually attained the Way. *Haikai* is different from the way of government, but it teaches wonderful meaning. Therefore, *haikai* is like *huaji*: its design seems to be oratorical and witty, and its language makes “fire” into “water,” or reveals wonderful meaning through comedy. Yet, *haikai* can convey what is deep in the heart through its words.”<sup>17</sup>

In the passage above, Kigin first tries to justify *haikai* by tracing the origin of the term to the Chinese histories, the *Han shu* (The Han history) and the *Shi ji* (The record of history), both of which are considered to be authoritative classics. He then stresses that *haikai* can convey wonderful meaning, perfectly complying with the canonical concept of poetry, even though it is a comedy. A very similar definition of *haikai* is also found in the Danrin theorist Ichu’s treatise. He writes:

<sup>15</sup> One of the six principles. It is translated as *Tatoeuta*, evocative songs, in the Japanese preface to the *Kokinshu*.

<sup>16</sup> *Haikai umoregi*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>17</sup> *Haikai umoregi*, pp. 33-34.

About *haikai*, in *Haikai mogyu* 俳諧蒙求, I have traced its origins to the Japanese and Chinese classics. It has been said in Kiyosuke's *Ôgisho* that although *haikai* is not a way of government, it teaches wonderful meaning. Its effect seems to lie in oratory and wit. It makes fire into water, and reveals wonderful meaning through comedy. It is the oratory of heart and oratory of language, the wit of heart and the wit of language, the comedy of heart and the comedy of language.<sup>18</sup>

While it is true that the Danrin, as previous studies have pointed out, gives more attention to the oratorical and witty effect of *haikai*, the similar way in which the Teimon and the Danrin construct their theories is striking: both refer to the canonical texts to define *haikai* and emphasize that *haikai* teaches wonderful meaning through comedy.

However, the insistence on the didactic function and the authority of the canonical texts brought inevitable contradictions to comic linked verse, because *haikai* was a genre born through departing from the classical poetic tradition. *Haikai* grew out of *renga*, a linked verse form that emerged in the medieval period. It started as an entertaining poetic game in which the participants competed with each other in wit and humor by adding their own verse to the preceding ones, making linked verses of alternate seventeen- and fourteen-syllable lines. When *renga* became popular in the parlor gatherings of aristocrats, elite samurai and priests, the *renga* masters gradually polished the rules guiding *renga* composition and turned it into an elegant art form that was extendible to 100, 1,000, even 10,000 links. To elevate the status of *renga*, the *renga* masters denied its original entertaining purpose and humorous nature because the orthodox poetic theories identified poetry as a way to support the

government and to educate people; comic verse was thought to lack the qualities that could achieve this goal. Thus, the first collection of *renga*, *Tsukubashu* 筑波集 (The Tsukuba anthology, 1356), separated comic linked verses from the elegant *renga* by putting them in a *haikai* section. Another *renga* collection compiled when the verse form had matured, *Shinsen tsukubashu* 新選筑波集 (The newly selected Tsukuba anthology, 1495), contains no *haikai* verses at all. Subsequently, *haikai no renga* was always excluded from *renga* anthologies. This exclusion of *haikai* from classical poetry had a notable impact on the later development of *haikai* and contributed directly to *haikai*'s encounter with the *Zhuangzi*.

### The Essence of *Haikai* Language and the *Zhuangzi*

*Haikai* inherited the formalistic features of *renga*. It also followed most of the rules prescribed by the *renga* masters regarding the association and progression of a sequence. While taking the very same form of *renga*, *haikai* differed from classical *renga* in its comic approach and vernacular language. In order to distinguish *haikai* from *renga*, *haikai* masters declared that the use of *haigon*, or *haikai* language, was the hallmark of comic linked verse. Matsunaga Teitoku 松永貞徳 (1571-1653), the founder of the Teimon school, writes about this when talking about *haikai* regulations:

At the beginning, there was no distinction between *haikai* and *renga*. Later, linked verses that used purely elegant language were called *renga* while those that have included vernacular words were called *haikai*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Okanishi Ichu, *Kinrai haikai futaisho* 近来俳諧躰抄 (Notes on recent *haikai* styles, 1679), Ogata Tsutomu, ed., *Danrin Hairon shu* 談林俳論集 (Tokyo: Koten bunko, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Fujii Otoo 藤井乙男, "Teimon haikaishi" 貞門俳諧史 (The history of the Teimon *haikai*), in Yamamoto Sansei, ed. *Haiku Koza* 俳句講座 (Tokyo: Kaizosha, 1933) I, p. 127.

As these words suggest, *haikai* kept both the form and the rules of *renga*. The use of *haigon*--vocabulary that was not included in the classical poetic diction of *waka* and *renga*, such as slang, colloquial expressions of commoners, and Chinese-origin words--became the primary distinction between *haikai* and the traditional *renga*. The emphasis on non-classical language in *haikai* reflected the interest of the rising commoner class, who had been deprived the right of literacy in the past. Through the *haikai* language, commoners now could take pleasure in laughing at the "high" classes and the authorities, parodying the aristocratic classics, and making fun of social conventions.

The creation of *haigon*, however, brought about a serious problem in *haikai*'s signifying systems. *Haigon* was created in opposition to *kago* 歌語, or classical poetic diction, conventionalized by the imperially commissioned *waka* anthologies (*chokusenshu* 勅選集), especially the first eight, from the *Kokinshu* to the *Shin Kokinshu* 新古今集 (The new collection of ancient and present poems). This body of diction became the standard language for poetic composition for centuries. Both *waka* and *renga* employed only this unitary language, and their topics were limited to the elegant ones collected in the classical anthologies, such as love and the four seasons. When comic linked verse arose, the existing standard diction was challenged for the first time.<sup>20</sup> In fact, challenging, parodying, and recontextualizing the classical tradition became the very nature of *haikai* when it began to flourish at the end of the medieval age. By going beyond the classic poetic diction, however, *haikai* created a void in its signifying system: the *haigon* that never appeared in poetry before lacked established poetic essence.

A conventional *kago* is not simply an elegant word. Defined by the canonical poetic anthologies, each *kago* embodies a complex intertextual structure that implies a cluster of conventionalized poetic essence, or *hon'i*. *Hon'i* not only de-

fines the meaning of specific seasonal images, but also prescribes how a particular image should be presented. For instance, by the normative essence, when the image of "winter rain" is used, it signifies specifically the *shigure* 時雨, a short shower in the early winter, even though there are different kinds of rain in winter. Similarly, the image of spring rain has to be a kind of quiet and misty drizzling. If a cuckoo needs to be present in the scene, it is not allowed to break the quietness with noisy calls, but it is permissible if the bird gives out a single lonely cry. In other words, in the traditional signifying system a poetic image or motif becomes a strictly codified and heavily charged sign that signifies more than a simple object in the external world or the speaker's internal feelings. Above all, such an image evokes the associations and significance conventionalized by the celebrated classical texts. Needless to say, conventionalized signifiers limit the creativity of an individual poet. However, as an extremely condensed poetic form and a product of group composition, *haikai* needs heavily charged signifiers in order to sustain its poetic expression.

The development of Japanese poetry shows a tendency towards brevity, and this tendency is at its extreme in *haikai*. Except for a limited number of *choka* 長歌, or long poems, collected in the oldest anthologies, shortness characterizes all remaining Japanese poetic forms. The thirty-one-syllable classical genre *waka* is already short, but an individual verse of a *renga* sequence is even shorter: *renga* breaks *waka*'s thirty-one syllable form into seventeen- and fourteen-syllable shorter verses, building a linked verse through the alternation of the two types of short links. When *haikai* was reaching its maturity during the seventeenth century, the seventeen-syllable opening verse of a linked verse sequence, *hokku*, became independent and self-standing, forming one of the shortest poetic genres, known as *haiku* today. Although earlier *renga* masters also tried their hands at composing a sole opening verse, this was not a regular practice in classical *renga*. But, by the 1670s, composing a single *hokku* was already very common among *haikai* poets.

Along with the independence of the opening verse, the movement toward brevity was also evident in the fragmentation of a linked verse sequence. In *haikai*, each seventeen or fourteen

<sup>20</sup> Some folk song genres in the medieval period didn't follow the classical poetic diction, but they never became major genres of Japanese poetry.

syllable link must represent an independent world. Teitoku once wrote: “There is a change from *waka* to *renga*. In *waka*, sometimes the meaning of the content of the first three lines in a poem can be given in the remaining two lines. But in *renga*, the three lines of a preceding verse and the two lines of the following verse must have their own meaning respectively. *Haikai* is even more strict in this requirement.”<sup>21</sup>

The independence of individual verses in a linked sequence led to the condensation of *haikai* in both form and content. In order to expand the poetic capacity of a seventeen- or four-teen-syllable verse, *haikai* poets have to rely on mediating signs to build an intertextual construction. In addition, since the creation of *haikai* requires a constant shifting between the roles of speaker and audience, participants are at once the speakers and the listeners. As speakers, they must compose in accordance with the expectation of the audience, while as listeners they are always expected to understand what the preceding poem is intended to say and to respond immediately with an appropriate poem. Therefore, a familiar set of codified signs communicating the poetic conventions and criteria to all the participants is essential. In other words, *haikai* needs a body of mediating signs to translate the surface meaning of the limited words and to explain the deeper significance the poem suggests.

A word with *hon'i* functions as a mediating sign that generates two or more texts as well as the associated significance(s) simultaneously within the poem, greatly increasing its significance-carrying capacity.<sup>22</sup> *Hon'i* also guides the reading of the poem, providing the necessary context or subcontext for the extemporaneous dialogue of a linked verse sequence. Therefore, not only did conservative Teimon poets such as

Kigin discuss the use of *hon'i* in lengthy handbooks, the Danrin also stresses *hon'i* in their *haikai* theories. However, when *haigon* is introduced, there is no convenient normative essence behind this important part of their poetic language. The lack of mediating power would directly affect the construction of the meaning of a brief *haikai* verse, either leaving it as a superficial parody or conveying only the surface value of the words. Apparently, this presented a serious problem to the *haikai* poets who firmly believed that comic linked verse must convey wonderful meaning.

To remedy this problem, the Danrin poets tried to include the *Zhuangzi* as a cardinal source of normative poetic essence. Ichu, the vocal Danrin theorist, repeatedly asserted that “the *Zhuangzi* embodies the *hon'i* of *haikai*,” and “nothing embodied in the *hon'i* of the *Zhuangzi* is not found in *haikai*.” This argument is not merely a defence strategy. It is also an effort to use the Daoist classic to supply *hon'i* to their new language, *haigon*. In order to prove that the *Zhuangzi* has been a source of *hon'i* of Japanese poetry since the classical age, Ichu quotes extensively from the *Zhuangzi* to interpret the essence of Japanese poetry, not only that of *haikai*, but also that of the *waka* and *renga*. He painstakingly shows how a personified cuckoo in a *Kokinshu* poem finds its *hon'i* in a *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*, which personifies a perch in a carriage rut. He also argues that a *haikai* verse which depicts the early *haikai* poet Soka as a *shogi* 将棋 player actually conveys the *hon'i* of the fictional figures in the *Zhuangzi*. By demonstrating that “even the poems in the ‘Haikai’ section of the *Kokinshu* take [*Zhuangzi*’s] *gugen* as *hon'i*,”<sup>23</sup> Ichu tries to demonstrate that what is articulated in the *Zhuangzi* has long been part of the accepted normative essence of Japanese poetry. The Danrin’s such effort can also be clearly seen in Ichu’s defense for *Kabashira hyakku*.

As mentioned earlier, Soin’s *Kabashira hyakku* is a work that intentionally breaks the conventions of the existing signifying systems. The Teimon school, therefore, criticized Soin for “having lost the *hon'i* and simply spitting out

<sup>21</sup> *Tensuisho* 天水抄 (Notes of Heavens and Waters, 1644), KHT 2, p. 399.

<sup>22</sup> The discussion on the *hon'i*, *honka* and *hon-zetsu* as mediating signs and texts is inspired by Michael Riffaterre’s discussion on intertextuality in *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> *Haikai mogyu*, p. 84.



whatever he wants to say.”<sup>24</sup> Refuting such criticism, Ichu provides evidence of how each of Soin’s verses has its *hon’i* derived from Japanese and Chinese classics. Among the classics, the *Zhuangzi* is a prime source. One of Soin’s poems in *Kabashira hyakku* deliberately changed the normative essence of *mushi* 虫 (insect):

*mama kuou to ya* “I want to eat a meal!”  
*mushi no naku ran* An insect is crying.

In the *waka* tradition, an insect’s cry typically signifies the autumn melancholy: an insect’s faint singing breaking the stillness at night evokes profound loneliness and an awareness of the passing of the season. In Soin’s verse, however, the insect cries hungrily for its meal, creating a humorous picture entirely different from the traditional essence. The first half of the verse uses vernacular language, “I want to eat a meal,” which has never been part of the normative essence associated with the image “*mushi*,” the insect. The writer of *Shibuuchiwa*, therefore, commented on the verse: “I never knew of an insect that eats meals or drinks wine. This must be an extraordinary bug. If the speaker never saw or heard of such insect either, I would say this is a total fabrication. It is merely the speaker’s fib.”<sup>25</sup> The Teimon’s criticism reflects the orthodox point of view that a poem is a means to convey the truth of things. Fabrication, therefore, is considered to be against the nature of poetry and harmful to its quality. To this criticism from the Teimon, Ichu writes:

In the “Autumn Floods” chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, there is the following passage: “The Kui<sup>26</sup> said to the millipede,

‘I have this one leg that I hop along on, though I make little progress. Now how in the world do you manage to work all those ten thousand legs of yours?’ The millipede said, ‘You don’t understand.’”<sup>27</sup> This is a conversation between Kui and a millipede. As I have mentioned in *Haikai mogyu*, the *Zhuangzi* also has birds and fish that can talk. . . . But some *haikai* masters believe that this kind of expression betrays *hon’i* and they wouldn’t describe anything that does not exist. It is the fortune of our time that we have a verse as the above which awakens those *haikai* masters from the sleep of their minds. Although in *renga* there was nothing like this kind of expression, *haikai* should take this as its own *hon’i*. From now on when one composes *haikai*, one should understand this point and create a verse like this.”<sup>28</sup>

Ichu’s reply revealed the purpose of the Danrin’s embracing the *Zhuangzi*. By finding the *hon’i* of the fictional depiction and wild images in the *Zhuangzi*, the Danrin poets tried to break the fossilized poetic associations and invent new poetic significance, which was otherwise prohibited by the conventional signifying system.

As a well-known classic, the *Zhuangzi* also equips the Danrin with a handy source of reference to attach poetic essence to the vernacular words, that is, to transform newly invented *haigon* into a mediating sign, which translates the surface meaning of the verse into the intended significance and provides the context of the poetic dialogue. A verse from Soin’s *Kabashira hyakku*, for example, uses a peculiar place name:

<sup>24</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> *Shibuuchiwa*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Burton Watson in his translation of the *Zhuangzi* explains that Kui is a “being with only one leg. Sometimes it is described as a spirit or a strange beast, sometimes as a historical personage—the music Master Kui.” See his *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York and Lon-

don: Columbia University Press, 1968. Henceforth abbreviated CWC.), p. 183. The romanization of the translation has been altered.

<sup>27</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 183.

<sup>28</sup> *Shibuuchiwa hento*, p. 61.

*utsuke no yamaji*     The mountain path in  
                                  Mount Emptiness,  
*kayoji no tsuyu*     And a drop of dew on  
                                  the passing road.<sup>29</sup>

The use of famous place names, *meisho* 名所, together with *honka* 本歌 (classic verses that became the foundation of allusive variations) and *honzetsu* 本説 (classic texts used as foundation sources of allusive variations)<sup>30</sup>, is one of the frequently used intertextual devices which demonstrates the authority of the classic reference in Japanese poetry. In the traditional poetics, the “famous place” does not simply mean a famous site such as a tourist attraction. It refers to the places famous in literary history, places to which many poems have been dedicated; hence specific *hon'i* have been attached. The use of a place name, therefore, is limited to the famous places defined by the classical works and expected to embody certain *hon'i*. “Mount Emptiness” in Soin’s poem, however, is a fictional place name. From the conventional point of view, the use of

an unknown place name based on personal preference is a serious flaw. Annoyed by Soin’s liberal use of place name, the author of *Shibuuchiwa* says: “I have never heard of this ‘famous place.’ This, again, must have been made up according to the speaker’s own opinion.”<sup>31</sup>

Laughing at this accusation, Ichu replies:

You don’t even know what Mount Emptiness means by now? In the *Zhuangzi* there is ‘Not-Even-Anything Village 無何有之郷’ and ‘the Field of Broad-and-Boundless 広莫之野’ The *Zhuangzi* also writes about places like ‘north of the Red River and in the hills of Kunlun 赤水之北崑崙之丘’ but there are no such mountains or fields. ‘Mount Emptiness’ is the same kind of image. You should understand that the entire verse is to express what is meant by the word Emptiness.”<sup>32</sup>

Not-Even-Anything Village and the Field of Broad-and-Boundless are both fictional places depicted in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. Rather than the literal meaning of the names, these metaphorical images signify a boundless world that transcends all worldly existences. Ichu’s reply shows that metaphorical expressions like Not-Even-Anything Village and the Field of Broad-and-Boundless in the *Zhuangzi* has already become common knowledge among the Danrin school poets and this shared knowledge is the basis of their understanding of Soin’s verse. He ridicules the author of *Shibuuchiwa* for his not knowing these famous words of the *Zhuangzi*, pointing out that the essence of the entire poem lies in the place name mediating the two texts. Like the metaphorical images in the *Zhuangzi*, “Mount Emptiness” reveals the intended meaning of the verse--the existential emptiness and transience.

From the examples above we can see that the Danrin poets’ taking the *Zhuangzi* as the authori-

<sup>29</sup> Shibuuchiwa hento, IV, p. 69.

<sup>30</sup> The concept of *honzetsu* is closely related to *honka*. While *honka* refers to the classic texts of Japanese poetry, *honzetsu* includes almost all other types of canonical works, such as the early Japanese narratives, Chinese poems and classics, proverbs, etc.. If a word with *hon'i* functions as a mediating sign, *honka* and *honzetsu* are mediating texts, which, when quoted in a poem or alluded to, provide rich associations with another text or texts, setting an authoritative code of reading based on the normative tradition or convention. *Honka* and *honzetsu* are particularly helpful to the short forms of Japanese verses; it amplifies the poetic expression through an intertextual construction. While *honka* and *honzetsu* are commonly used by different *haikai*, the Danrin is particularly interested in using the *Zhuangzi* as a major source of mediating texts. The Danrin poets not only draw upon the *Zhuangzi* to generate *hon'i* of images and words, but also directly use the *Zhuangzi* as *honzetsu* to construct new poetic essence.

<sup>31</sup> Shibuuchiwa, p. 48.

<sup>32</sup> Shibuuchiwa hento, p. 69.

tative source of the *hon'i* of *haikai* is not an accidental choice. It first has to do with the Japanese poetic tradition that gives ultimate authority to classics. To the Danrin poets who sought a classic authority, the *Zhuangzi* is an appropriate choice: its free spirit, imaginative expressions, evocative images and deliberate reversal of meaning fit their needs perfectly. Moreover, the *Zhuangzi* asserts an aesthetic attitude that sees beautiful qualities in ordinary and even “low” beings. This attitude makes it immediately possible to provide the vernacular *haikai* language with “wonderful meaning,” or poetic essence. In addition, the *Zhuangzi* as a Chinese classic has been known in Japan since the Nara period. Though never so much emphasized as by the *haikai* poets, the *Zhuangzi* has the status of classic and popularity among educated people. These qualities readily make it a useful referential source for the group composition of comic linked verse. Thus, the *Zhuangzi* is chosen as an effective mediating source to fill up the void in *haikai*’s signifying system.

### The Essence of *Haikai* Image and the *Zhuangzi*

Among many images that carry *hon'i* from the *Zhuangzi*, the butterfly is the most well-known and frequently used. Even before the Danrin’s assertion, its association with the *Zhuangzi* had already been part of the normative essence of the image. When defining the *hon'i* of the seasonal words in *haikai*, Kigin writes the following under the entry “butterfly:”

Butterfly: The scene of a butterfly alighting on rape blossoms, napping among the flowers with no worries, or its appearance as it flutters its feathery wings, dancing like snowflakes whirling. Also, it is associated with Zhuang Zhou’s dream, suggesting that one hundred years pass as a gleam in the butterfly’s dream.<sup>33</sup>

A well-known *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*, “Zhuang Zhou’s dream” relates the following story:

Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn’t know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn’t know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou.<sup>34</sup>

Comparing Kigin’s entry and the passage from the *Zhuangzi*, it is clear that the essence of butterfly as a seasonal word is infused with the meaning of the *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*. To demonstrate the use of the image, Kigin provides some verses in the entry. One of them is as the following:

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>chiru hana ya</i> | Scattering blossoms:        |
| <i>kocho no yume</i> | The dream of a butterfly—   |
| <i>hyakunenme</i>    | A hundred years in a gleam. |

An informed reader can easily recognize that the essence of the images, as well as that of the entire verse, are situated in the intertext of the *Zhuangzi*. The butterfly links to dream through the *gugen* on Zhuang Zhou’s dream and these two images as mediating signs form the primary metaphor: the transient reality can hardly be distinguished from a brief dream. This essence derived from the *Zhuangzi* is favorably presented in the poetry of the Danrin as well. One of Soin’s poems reads:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>chocho no yumeji ya</i> | The road in the dream of the butterfly-- |
| <i>do ni mayou ran</i>     | It must have lost its Way. <sup>35</sup> |

<sup>33</sup> *Teimon haikaishu* (Tokyo: Nihon Haisho Taikai Kankokai, 1926), p. 426.

<sup>34</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 49. The romanization of the name has been altered.

<sup>35</sup> *Monodaneshu* 物種集, KHT, III, p. 453.

As in the poem cited above, in this verse “butterfly” and “dream” are paired, pointing to the canonical text upon which the poem is constructed. Interestingly, Soin makes a parody of Zhuangzi’s *gugen* through the use of a pun in the poem. The word *do* in Japanese can signify both the “road” in the ordinary meaning and “the Way” as the universal principle in the Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian teachings, but the presence of the mediating sign, “butterfly,” suggests a reading of the word in the Daoist context. By using the pun combined with the butterfly’s dream, the poem casts a comic version of its model *gugen*: the butterfly--the transformed self of Zhuang Zhou (Zhuangzi)--has lost his Way, the *Do*, in his dream. Soin’s verse makes perfect sense either with or without the model text. Yet, only with the normative essence of the other text, Soin’s deceptive transfer of the butterfly’s dream creates a comedy, the *haikai* spirit the Danrin poets much valued.

### The Essence of *Haikai* Linking and the *Zhuangzi*

The Danrin poets not only uses the *Zhuangzi* as a cardinal source of *hon’i* to enrich their poetic expressions, but also to increase the possibilities of joining verses together in a linked sequence. In *renga* and *haikai*, how to relate a joined verse, *tsukeku* 付句 to its preceding verse, *maeku*, is a complicated art. There are many different types of linking, but the major ways of joining verses together, as described by the Shomon poets, are three types: connection by words (*kotoba-zuke* 詞付), connection by contents (*kokoro-zuke* 心付), and connection by scent (*nioi-zuke* 匂付).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Matsuo Basho has typically associated the Teimon *haikai* with the “word link” and the Danrin *haikai* with the “content link.” He characterizes the *haikai* of his own school, the Shomon, with “scent link.” “Scent link” relies neither on classical lexical associations nor on content connections. Instead, the joined verse is linked to the previous verse by shared mood or atmosphere. For an in-depth discussion on the methods of linking in *haikai*, see Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams, Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the*

The Danrin school favours the content link. The way of joining also has its *hon’i*, in which the conventionalized associations of words, images, and themes are the core.

The existence of *hon’i* in linking is very important to a group composition, because it forms the basis of the shared knowledge that helps to create an extemporaneous sequence. But, when a *haigon* is used as the central image or theme, the conventional association of words, images, and themes are no longer available to form the link. In order to bridge this gap in linking, the Danrin poets borrow the *asobi* 遊び--the non-pragmatic, carefree, and iconoclastic attitude--of the *Zhuangzi* to renew the principles regarding the link. After the verse about the hungry bug, Soin has a joined verse as the following:

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>noasobi ni</i>     | Outing to the fields -- |
| <i>kakeri mawarit</i> | Running around          |
| <i>matashitewa</i>    | Once and again.         |

Teimon’s *Shibuuchiwa* considers this verse as an inappropriate *tsukeku*, arguing that since there are no established connection of either the words or the contents between this and the preceding poem. In other words, the linking of the two verses is not based on the traditional *hon’i*. To disprove the Teimon’s accusation, Ichu, again, refers to the *Zhuangzi*. He says: “Regarding the intended essence of joining, ‘Running around/Once and again’ is connected to ‘I want to eat my meal,’ and ‘Outing to the fields’ relates to ‘An insect is crying.’ Also, without changing anything, the combination of the two verses--the insect, at its outing to the fields, is running around and crying for a meal--reflects the *hon’i* of Zhuangzi’s *gugen* I have just mentioned. There is nothing inappropriate.”<sup>37</sup> As seen earlier, the *gugen* Ichu cites is full of wild imagination and free fabrication, and when citing the *gugen* Ichu asserts that “*haikai* should take this as its own normative essence.” Here Ichu applies this liberal spirit of creation to their method of linking. Ev-

*Poetry of Basho* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 82-115.

<sup>37</sup> Shibuuchiwa hento, p.62.

dently, by referring to the *Zhuangzi* the Danrin poets not only immensely expanded their signifying system but also enjoyed much greater freedom in creating novel links. Note that the significance of this new way of linking is not limited to its novelty. By associating their way of linking with the *Zhuangzi*, the Danrin introduced the *asobi* spirit into the essence of linking, adding philosophical overtone to the witty verse play.

However, the Danrin's use of the *Zhuangzi* had limitations. Their understanding of the *Zhuangzi* was limited mainly to its unrestrained expressions and a few notions from the famous *gugen* stories. As one might expect, the verses they produced with reference to the *Zhuangzi* did not have enduring appeal, although some of them left very novel impressions.

Nonetheless, the Danrin's attempt to use the *Zhuangzi* to regenerate the existing signifying system inspired later *haikai* poets. Matsuo Tosei 松尾桃青 (Matsuo Basho 芭蕉), who studied with both the Teimon and the Danrin masters and later founded his own group, the Shomon school, attained a deeper understanding of the poetic possibilities suggested by the Daoist classic through his observation of Chinese poetic tradition. In Basho's poetry the *Zhuangzi* as an intertext is organically integrated in the poet's lyrical depiction of his aesthetic experience, creating a world at once expressive and profound.

### The Essence of the *Haikai* Experience and the *Zhuangzi*

The Shomon school became prominent during a time when "Chinese style" became very popular among *haikai* poets. Different from the Teimon and the Danrin, who borrowed the *Zhuangzi* for didactic or rhetorical purpose, Basho and his followers found correspondences between the Daoist principles and the Chinese poetic tradition, particularly the relationship between the Daoist spirit and the recluse traits in Chinese poetry. From the beginning, Basho and his disciples drew upon a staggering body of Chinese sources in their works, and Basho's allusions and citations showed a salient inclination towards the reclusive taste that could be characteristically described with the key notions of the *Zhuangzi*, namely, the "free and easy wandering"

(*xiaoyaoyou* 逍遙遊, *shoyoyu* in Japanese) and "Natural and non-interference" (*ziran wuwei* 自然無為, *shizen mui* in Japanese).

The Shomon's early poems that draw on the *Zhuangzi* reflect Danrin tastes. A *hokku* contest entitled *Inaka no kuawase* 田舎の句合 (Hokku contest in the boondocks, 1680), for example, contains a number of poems that make explicit or implicit allusions to the *Zhuangzi*. One of them says:

|                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>tobi ni notte</i>    | Riding on a kite                |
| <i>haru wo okuru ni</i> | To see the spring off-          |
| <i>shirakumo ya</i>     | The white clouds. <sup>38</sup> |

While appearing to be an imaginary portrait of a late spring scene, this verse makes a hidden allusion to the "Free and Easy Wandering" chapter in the *Zhuangzi*, which creates an image of a *Peng* bird that soars in the vast sky with great freedom. Although the poem does not use any word directly from the *Zhuangzi*, Basho's comments on the poem reveal their connections: "Riding on a kite and wandering freely in the boundless infinity, the joy expressed in the verse of the right group is indeed boundless."<sup>39</sup>

In the *Zhuangzi*, "free and easy wandering" is a figurative description of the state of ultimate freedom, and to achieve this state is considered to be the culmination of joy. Apparently, Basho's criterion is based on this essence of the *Zhuangzi* and he praises the verse because it creates an atmosphere reminiscent of what is described in the "Free and Easy Wandering" chapter. As in the verses of the Danrin school discussed earlier, here the intended metaphor is established through its intertextual reference to the *Zhuangzi*. But instead of citing key images and words directly from the model text, the reference in this poem is concealed in an imaginary scene. To understand

<sup>38</sup> Komiya Toyotaka 小宮豊隆, et al, comp., *Kohon Basho zenshu* 校本芭蕉全集 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1962-69. Henceforth abbreviated KBZ), VII, p. 362.

<sup>39</sup> *Inaka no kuawase*, KBZ, VII, p. 362.

this kind of mediating sign, a good knowledge of the *Zhuangzi* is required. Indeed, at this time, the Shomon poets already knew the Daoist classic very well, as Hattori Ransetsu (1654-1707), a major poet of the Shomon school, proudly wrote in his preface to the *Inaka no kuawase*: “Master Tosei’s comments encapsulated the quintessence of Zhuang Zhou’s thought. It could make the eloquent Lin Xiyi speechless.”<sup>40</sup> Yet, at this stage, the Shomon’s adoption of Daoist ideas was still on a conceptual level, not far beyond that of the preceding Danrin school. This tendency was changed by Basho’s observation of the spirit of free and easy wandering as the quintessence of Chinese poetic tradition; the great *haikai* master asserted this spirit with both his poetry and his life.

In the early winter of 1680, Basho moved from one area of Edo to a thatched hut on the less-developed east bank of the Sumida River in the Fukagawa district. Hirota calls this dwelling a “site for Basho to put free and easy wandering into practice.”<sup>41</sup> Although not in the exact sense of a believer’s practice of his religion, Basho’s move to Fukagawa was a sincere effort to pursue the poetic ideals of eccentricity and unconventionality (*fukyo* 風狂 and *furyu* 風流), which, as he saw, were embodied in the aesthete-recluse tradition of China and Japan and highlighted by the spirit of free and easy wandering.<sup>42</sup> The poems in *Minashiguri* 虚栗 (Empty chestnut, 1683), a collection of *haikai* published after Basho’s move to Fukagawa, clearly reflect this pursuit. The following poem from that collection is Basho’s portrayal of his hut life:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>kori nigaku</i>     | Ice -- bitter-tasting--                  |
| <i>enso ga nodo wo</i> | Just enough to moisten                   |
| <i>uruoseri</i>        | The throat of the<br>mole. <sup>43</sup> |

While the verse is easily comprehensible as a humorous sketch of the hardship of Basho’s life at the hut, the peculiar choice of the *haigon*, the mole, draws the reader’s attention and causes him feel unsatisfied with a mimetic reading. This peculiar image, in fact, is not a description of an animal that happened to be in the sight of the speaker. As has frequently been pointed out, it is an allusion to a *gugen* in the *Zhuangzi*. According to the *gugen*, Yao, the legendary monarch, wants to cede the empire to recluse Xu You 許由. Xu says:

You govern the world and the world is already well governed. Now if I take your place, will I be doing it for a name? But name is only the guest of reality -- will I be doing it so I can play the part of a guest? When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch. When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful. Go home and forget the matter, my lord. I have no use for the rulership of the world.<sup>44</sup>

About this passage, Lin Xiyi’s annotation explains: “That Xu You does not want to play the part of a guest means he does not let outer things dominate him. The ‘tailorbird’ and the ‘mole’ are metaphors Xu You uses for himself, implying that he, like the mole, is contented with what he has.”<sup>45</sup> As indicated by Lin’s explanations, the

<sup>40</sup> *Inaka no kuawase*, p. 375.

<sup>41</sup> Hirota, *Basho no geijutsu*, p. 323.

<sup>42</sup> For a fuller discussion of the relationship of the Daoist idea and the reclusive traits in Chinese poetry, see Peipei Qiu, “Poetics of the Natural: A Study of Taoist Influence on Basho.” Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1994), pp. 83-109.

<sup>43</sup> KBZ, I, p. 72. The poem is a *hokku* in the collection.

<sup>44</sup> Watson, CWC, pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup> Lin Xiyi, *Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi* (J. *Soji Kensai kogi*, Kyoto edition, 1627. Henceforth abbreviated ZJK.), 1/8a & b. The work is reprinted in Nagasawa Kikuya, comp., *Wakokubon shoshi taisei* 和刻本諸子大成 (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1976), IX and X. It has been noted by both

metaphor of the mole evokes a preference for simplicity and spiritual freedom, which carries the essence Basho seeks when using the word in his *hokku*. Thus, the “mole” functions not merely as an element in the picture or reality, but also as a mediating sign that signifies the specific *hon’i*. With this mediating sign, all the other details are translated, and the humour of the tableau takes on philosophical depth: the mole is in fact the eccentric self-image of the speaker, who, following the aesthete-recluse tradition, finds perfect happiness in the solitary and humble life.

Basho’s allusion above demonstrates a fundamental difference from that of the Danrin school: while forming an intertextual construct that amplifies the poetic significance, it also expresses the speaker’s emotive experience that resonates with the tradition represented by the model text. In this meaning, Basho’s use of the classic is not only referential, but also lyrical. It restores lyricism to *haikai*, which, in the hands of the Danrin, had become a kind of intellectual game. This quality of Basho’s poetry owes much to his unique way of life as a hut-dweller and a constant wayfarer. As a sincere artist he lived a life in the way he wanted to portray in his art.

Of course, not all of Basho’s verses which refer to the *Zhuangzi* are expressive, but, in his mature works, whenever an intertextual reference is used, the poet skillfully fuses it with his own aesthetic experience so that the intertextual construct and the expressive/descriptive mode form a natural unity. Basho seems to have deliberately avoided using those “worn-out” expressions cited from the *Zhuangzi*, such as the butterfly in Zhuang Zhou’s dream, perhaps because they make it more difficult to achieve natural unity. But when he does make an allusion to a well-known *gugen*, he shows his mastery in melting it naturally in his poetic world. The following poem is also from *Minashiguri*.

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>kuwanomi ya</i>     | The mulberries --         |
| <i>hananaki cho no</i> | Without flowers, they are |
|                        | the butterfly’s           |
| <i>yosutezake</i>      | Hermit wine.              |

In this poem, the familiar association between “butterfly” and “dream” is replaced with a novel combination: “butterfly” is combined with the “mulberries,” a seasonal word for summer and an image of the countryside, creating a close-up shot of a peaceful moment of rural life. At first glance the allusion seems to have completely faded in the rural scenery, but the occurrence of the last image, *yosutezake* 世捨て酒, or the hermit wine, alerts the reader to consider the meaning of the first lines in light of the recluse taste. *Yosutezake* is not a commonly used word. It is a compound made of two nouns: *yosute*, renouncing the world, and *sake*, wine. With a retroactive reading, the intertextual context surfaces and adds layers of significance to the seemingly simple poem. An informed reader will realize that each of the first two images is loaded with significance accumulated in previous texts. The image “mulberries” has long been used in Chinese poetry to signify rustic country life. Since the foremost Chinese recluse poet Tao Qian 陶潜 (365-427) uses the image in his famous poem “Returning to Gardens and Fields to Dwell” (*Gui yuantian ju* 歸園田居), the mulberry tree has been used as a typical image to signify the life and taste of a recluse. More specifically, it is a symbol of the setting in which a lofty recluse finds home. In *waka* tradition, too, the image is always associated with pastoral scenes. Since Basho’s works often make direct quotations from Tao Qian’s poetry, his depiction of the mulberries as the hermit wine here is apparently a careful choice that evokes the association between his immediate experience of the hut life and the long recluse tradition. The transfer of the significance of the first image leads to an intertextual reading of the second one, suggesting the possible interpretation of butterfly as a special sign from the *gugen* about Zhuang Zhou’s dream. In this context, the butterfly becomes an agent of the philosophical perception of the fleeting nature of reality. It is to this butterfly that the retreat from the transient world is preferable, and the mulber-

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Nonomura and Hirota that Basho’s allusion perhaps draws not only on the *Zhuangzi*, but also on Lin’s explanations. See Nonomura’s annotation to *Minashiguri*, KBZ, III, p. 232, and Hirota, *Basho no geijutsu*, pp. 311-313.

ries at a hermit's yard are tasty like delicious wine.

As seen above, the spirit of free and easy wandering had a remarkable impact on the thematic tendency of the Shomon school in the 1680s. Along with the maturity of his poetic style in the 1690s, Basho consciously applied the Daoist principles in his critical theories. His critical thought in this period placed much emphasis on naturalness, a tendency closely related to the Daoist hallmark of the Natural. Stressing naturalness in poetic expression, his *hokku* and linked verses tended to use fewer allusions and quotations. But his prose poems, the *haibun* 俳文 (*haikai* prose) and *kikobun* 紀行文 (travel accounts), still frequently make references to *hon-zetsu*, and the *Zhuangzi* was among the sources he draws upon the most. Perhaps one reason for this is because the intertextual signifier is essential to indicate the poetic quality of a *haibun*, since a *haibun* has no conventionally fixed form that sets it apart from ordinary narratives. One of Basho's famous travel accounts, *Oi no kobumi* 笈の小文 (Manuscript in my knapsack), for example, begins with the following paragraph:

In my body, which has one hundred bones and nine openings, exists something I have called *furabo* 風羅坊. I must have meant that my body resembles spun silk that is easily torn in the wind. From long ago, this *furabo* has loved the "eccentric poem," and at last, made this its life's task. Sometimes it has become tired and ready to abandon it; other times it has become so proud that it feels superior to others. Then, "right" and "wrong" would conflict inside it, leaving its body with no peace. At one time it wanted to establish itself through worldly pursuits, but its poetry stopped it; for a while it also wanted to devote itself to learning and become a scholar, but again its hope was shattered by its art. In the end, being incapable and talentless, it has been bound to a single line of poetry.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Oi no kobumi*, KBZ, VI, p. 75.

From the opening sentence, the *haibun* seems to resist deciphering according to the normal meaning of the words. The reader is forced to determine the implications either by guessing or by searching for references. If we agree that poetry is meant to express concepts and things by indirection, this paragraph is no doubt poetry, for its language deliberately avoids directness and clarity.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that Basho's peculiar description of his body at the beginning of the paragraph is inspired by the *Zhuangzi*. In the second chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, there is a similar description:

The hundred joints, the nine openings, the six organs, all come together and exist here (as my body). . . . It would seem as though there must be some True Lord among them. But whether I succeed in discovering his identity or not, it neither adds nor detracts from his Truth.<sup>47</sup>

Using the *Zhuangzi* as a reference, the reader realizes that the phrase, "the hundred bones and nine openings," though not the exact words of the *Zhuangzi*, serves as a mediating text that calls for a retroactive reading. In this context the reader can also realize that the *furabo* indicates the true identity of Basho, just like the "True Lord" in the body of *Zhuangzi*. *Furabo*, which has been translated differently into "wind-swept spirit,"<sup>48</sup> "Gauze-in-the-Wind-Priest,"<sup>49</sup> and

<sup>47</sup> Watson, CWC, p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> Nobuyuki Yuasa, trans., *Basho: The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1966), p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Keene, *World Within Walls* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1976), p. 92.



“wind-blown-hermit,”<sup>50</sup> etc., is a creature that is easily broken, is devoid of worldly values and willingly submits itself to nature’s force, the wind. In Basho’s works there is another metaphorical image the poet likes to use as his self-portrait--the plantain tree. Plantain, the word in Japanese is *basho* 芭蕉, represents the same qualities as that of *Furabo*. In his prose poem “On Replanting the Plantain Tree,” Basho describes the plantain tree as the following:

Shaken by the wind, the leaves wave  
as a phoenix’s tail. Torn in the rain, they  
look like a green dragon’s ears. The  
new leaves grow rapidly each day, as  
what Zhang Hengqu has wished for his  
learning, and as if they are eager to un-  
roll under master Huaisu’s writing  
brush. But I don’t follow these two  
models. I simply enjoy my leisure time  
in the shade; I love these plantain leaves  
for the ease with which they are torn in  
the wind and the rain.<sup>51</sup>

The attitude toward life as symbolized by the plantain leaves is clearly Daoist. Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠 (1022-1077), a celebrated Song Confucian scholar, and Huaisu 懷素 (634-707?), a famous priest and calligrapher, were both model scholars who achieved success through hard work. It is said that when seeing the rapid growth of the plantain leaves, Zhang wrote a poem to express his wish for his learning to grow as fast as the plantain tree. Huaisu’s name was related to the plantain because he used plantain leaves as paper to practice writing skills. But Basho declares that he will follow neither of them; what he prefers is the life of non-doing--to enjoy his leisure time in the shade of the plantain leaves. Noting the beautiful images Basho chooses to describe the appearance of the plantain leaves broken in the

wind and rain, we can see that vanishing along with nature’s course is not presented as a tragic experience in Basho’s world. Instead, he highlights the total acceptance of nature’s working and the ultimate peace of being one with nature. This spirit is the essence of free and easy wandering. It is also the *hon’i* the poet tries to convey in his poetic prose.

In the retrospective discourse that follows his depiction of *furabo*, the poet deliberately sets his eccentric way of life apart from that of a diligent scholar. The statement of “being incapable and talentless, he has been bound to a single line of poetry” may sound illogical to Western readers. This simultaneously self-depreciating and self-praising tone, however, is characteristic in traditional Chinese and Japanese writings, and the glorification of incapability and uselessness represents Daoist values. Thus, with the Daoist classic and the related literature as the intertextual reference, this seemingly ambiguous and gloomy narrative is turned into poetry, a lyrical portrait of the speaker’s poetic self.

As seen in the examples discussed above, the Edo period *haikai* poets’ interests in the *Zhuangzi* had much to do with the tradition of Japanese poetry that emphasized the authority of the classics. Following this classical tradition, the *haikai* poets borrowed the old to invent the new, and it was in this context that they used the *Zhuangzi* as an authoritative reference to justify comic linked verse and to regenerate its poetic essence. From the Danrin to the Shomon, the continuous efforts of the *haikai* poets achieved success, and the poetic essence invented through the intertextuality between *haikai* and the ancient Daoist classic helped turn the witty comic linked verse into a profound poetry.

<sup>50</sup> Richard B. Pilgrim, “The Religio-Aesthetic of Matsuo Basho,” in *The Eastern Buddhist*, 10 (1977) p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> *Basho o utsusu kotoba* 芭蕉を移す詞, KBZ, VI, pp. 504-505.